THE BEST OF FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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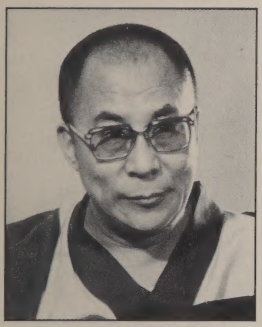

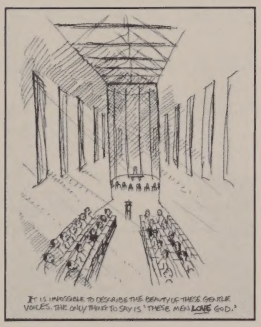

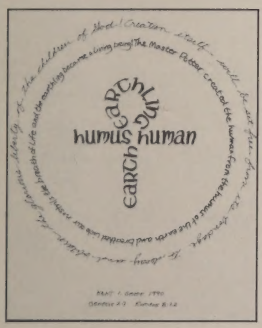

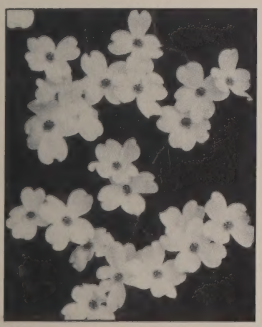

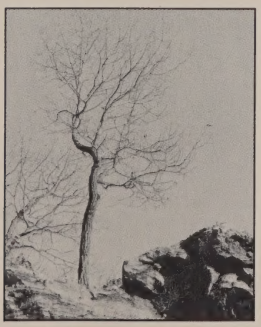

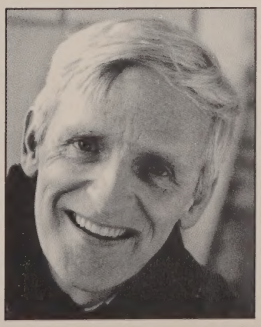

The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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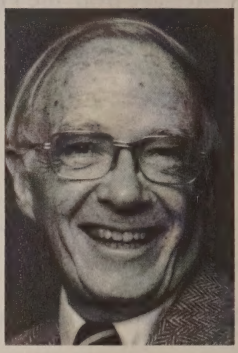


The 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, taking place in Chicago from August 28 to September 4, will be by all standards the most important interfaith event of the century.

Many of the most revered and influential leaders of the world's religious and spiritual communities (such as Fellowship in Prayer Advisors and/or authors Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, and Tom Berry, among others) will gather with thousands of men and women like ourselves to celebrate both our diversity and our oneness.

In honor of this great interfaith gathering we at Fellowship in Prayer, the interfaith journal, dedicate this special anthology issue to the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Like the Parliament, *Fellowship in Prayer* brings together "under one roof," as it were, the inspiring words of religious and spiritual leaders such as Matthew Fox, Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, Swami Nityananda, Douglas Steere, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Mother Tessa Bielecki, the Very Reverend Dr. James Parks Morton, and many others.

Equally important to us, and to our readers, are the stories told by women and men who have never written for publication before, but whose experience of the sacred has changed their lives.

Their spiritual experiences and insights, courage and hope, brightly illuminate the truth of Luke 17.21: "The kingdom of God is within you and among you."

Most important of all are our readers—some 10,000 of whom receive our journal six times a year. They live in every state of the union and in 80 countries. Like me—like most of us—they are caught up in the daily conflict between the human and the divine in each of us as we try to rid ourselves of the fear, anger and indifference that prevent us from treating everyone we meet with the loving kindness at the heart of our true self. And our readers find, as I do, that *Fellowship in Prayer* helps give us the courage and hope to keep on trying.

The Parliament of the World's Religions will last eight days. Those of us fortunate enough to attend will return home enriched by the wisdom

and guidance of so many who have celebrated in their own lives the certain knowledge of God's unconditional love and the passionate desire to share that love with everyone and everything God created.

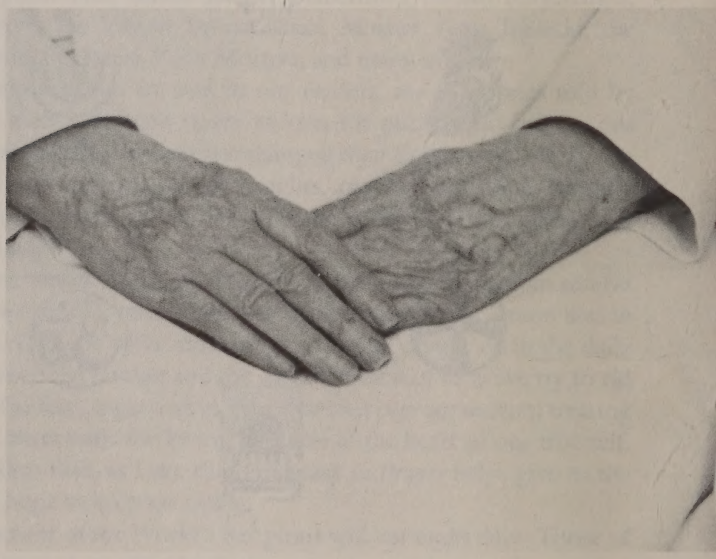
My hope is that the pages of this journal—an ongoing parliament of those who believe that to love God is to serve others—may enrich your life in the same way.

God between you and all harm.

Paul Walsh

A passage of breathtaking beauty in *the Sun My Heart* by the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, celebrates what this issue of *Fellowship in Prayer* is all about: the oneness of the human family, and the depths of caring that unite us to one another from generation to generation. Here are his words:

> I have a friend who is an artist. He has been away from home for nearly 40 years. He told me that every time he misses his mother, all he has to do is look at his hand and he feels better. His mother, a traditional Vietnamese woman, could read only a few Chinese characters and had never studied Western philosophy or science. Before he left Vietnam, she held his hand and told him, "Whenever you miss me, look into your hand my child. You will see me immediately." How penetrating these simple, sincere words! For nearly 40 years, he has looked into his hand many times.
>
> The presence of his mother is not just genetic. Her spirit, her hopes, and her life are also present in him. I know that my friend practices meditation, but I do not know whether he has chosen as a subject, "Looking into your



Twin sisters at seventy

Hand" . . . This subject can take him far in his practice. From his hand, he can penetrate deeply into the reality of beginningless and endless time. He will be able to see that thousands of generations before him and thousands of generations after him are all he. From time immemorial until the present moment, his life has never been interrupted and his hand is still there, a beginningless and endless reality.

This Special Edition of *Fellowship in Prayer*—which marks a great event, the centennial of the worldwide interfaith movement—brings you reprints of "the best of *FiP*." You will find on these pages uplifting and inspiring messages about the experiences that all people of every generation on our planet share: loss and happiness, anxiety, hope and peace.

Perhaps after reading this issue you will want to "look into your hand" to meditate on the spiritual connectedness and interdependence that underlie all existence and can overcome all differences.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

Janet Gnall

Deep in the sea are riches beyond compare. But if you seek safety, it is on the shore.

Sheikh Saadi

I did not ask for success, I asked for wonder. And You gave it to me.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

What can I say to you, my God? Shall I collect together all the words that praise your holy Name? Shall I give you all the names of this world, you, the Unnameable? Shall I call you God of my life, meaning of my existence, hallowing of my acts, my journey's end, bitterness of my bitter hours, home of my loneliness, you my most treasured happiness? Shall I say: Creator, Sustainer, Pardoner, Near One, Distant One, Incomprehensible One, God both of flowers and stars, God of the gentle wind and of terrible battles, Wisdom, Power, Loyalty and Truthfulness, Eternity and Infinity, you the All-merciful, you the Just One, you Love itself?

Karl Rahner

If you only knew that you are free!

Farid ad-din Attar

Throughout my whole life, during every moment I have lived, the world has gradually been taking on light and fire for me, until it has come to envelop me in one mass of luminosity, glowing from within, . . . the purple flush of matter imperceptibly fading into the gold of spirit, to be lost finally in the incandescence of a personal universe. . . .

This is what I have learnt from my contact with the earth—the diaphany of the divine at the heart of a glowing universe, the divine radiating from the depths of matter a-flame.

Teilhard de Chardin

For I have found a joy that is full and more than full.

Anselm of Canterbury

Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go. It is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.

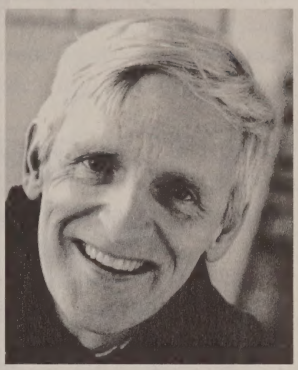
Alice Mackenzie Swaim

One of the best ways to worship God is simply to be happy.

Traditional Hindu Wisdom

The Coming Spiritual Renaissence: An Interview with Matthew Fox

On March 3, 1992, FIP president Paul Walsh and Mary Ford-Grabowsky, editor of Fellowship in Prayer, *interviewed Matthew Fox, the founder of the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California, and editor-in-chief of its influential magazine,* Creation Spirituality. *The following article, by Paul Walsh, is based on that interview and on Fox's books, especially* The Cosmic Christ *and* Creation Spirituality.



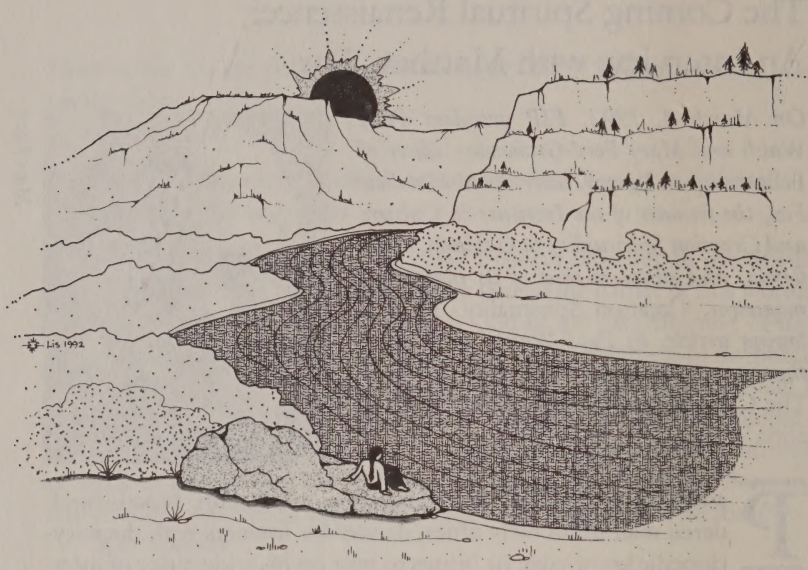
Mari Kane

Passionate and provocative, Matt Fox, a tall, slim, broad-shouldered man in his early fifties, dazzles his listeners with the encyclopedic knowledge he brings to bear on his wide range of interests: spirituality, theology, feminism, mysticism, deep ecology, the arts (especially music and dance), poetry, science (physics and biology in particular), deep ecumenism. His answers to our questions make it clear why he is widely regarded as one of the most challenging, creative, and prophetic voices of our times.

We asked Fox what, exactly, he means by Creation Spirituality. Western Christianity, he answered, presents us with a choice between two very different versions of God's intentions for us. The one most of us are all-too-familiar with is the Fall-Redemption model. It teaches us that by nature we are sinful and alienated from God, each other, and the rest of creation. Its legacy is too often guilt, fear, isolation, and self-hatred—projected onto the "other" in all its forms.

The earlier, creation-based spirituality—which is at the core of all the world's religions—affirms the original goodness of our natures, created in the image of God. It celebrated original blessing, rather than focusing on original sin. And so does Fox.

Creation spirituality, Fox told us, unleashes our vitality, creativity, playfulness. It sees us all as one: men and women, black and white, young and old, heterosexual and gay, Christian and non-Christian, "us" and "them." Creation spirituality, seeing each of us as a living image of



Lisa Smith

divinity, leads us into green pastures where we no longer need to dominate, control and destroy each other and the very planet we live on. It is the path that can lead us to a just, peaceful world, restored to ecological health and its original harmony.

As a movement, Creation Spirituality forms a kind of sacred circle made up of men and women whose passions have been touched by the issues of our day—deep ecologists, ecumenists, native peoples, justice activists, feminists, gay and lesbian peoples, scientists seeking to reconnect science and wisdom, people of prophetic faith traditions, artists seeking to express the spirituality of the body through music and dance—all these and many other groups find in the Creation Spirituality movement a common harmony and a common ground on which to dance.

Creation Spirituality is not just about Christianity, Fox said. It includes all faith traditions. Pointing out that his faculty at the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality includes a Jewish Sufi, a Zen master, a Lakota medicine man, a Yoruba priestess and a Wiccan, he makes the point that our salvation lies in a global, spiritual renaissance—an interfaith movement that will learn from, and put into practice, the spiritual

wisdom of all the world's religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, Taoism and Shintoism, Christianity in all its forms, and native religions throughout the world. Emphasizing the fundamental unity and shared spiritual and ethical values of all religious traditions can bring the whole world together in community and common purpose, Fox noted, while at the same time strengthening everyone's ties to her or his own practice or tradition.

This unleashing of the spiritual wisdom at the heart of all religions holds the last, best hope for the survival of life on our planet. There is no such thing as a Lutheran sun, a Buddhist moon, a Jewish ocean or a Roman Catholic forest, he points out.

When humanity comes to understand the ultimate unity of everyone and everything in creation, Fox said, we will have found the way out of our anthropocentric dilemma that is boring our young, killing our souls, trivializing our worship and destroying the planet.

The killing of Mother Earth is the number one ethical, spiritual, and human issue of our time. The devastation of our planet—its ozone layer and its tropical rain forests; the polluting and poisoning of our air, soil, and water; and the extinguishing of countless species of wildlife go on unabated, and largely ignored by our leaders.

Eight hundred years ago, Hildegard of Bingen warned us to not rip apart the "web of the universe" in our dealings with nature. She wrote:

> The earth should not be injured. The earth should not be destroyed. As often as the elements of the world are violated by ill treatment, so God will cleanse them. God will cleanse them through the sufferings, through the hardships of humankind. All of creation God gives to humankind to use. But if this privilege is misused, God's justice permits creation to punish humanity.

Until we understand and reverence the truth of that wisdom, all the technology and legislation and economic policy in the world will not bring about the needed changes. Change must come from within each of us, as individuals. We must first purify and restore our inner environment through prayer and meditation. Otherwise we will not have the will or the spiritual understanding needed to change our life style in ways that can restore the health of Mother Earth.

Part of Fellowship in Prayer's mission is to encourage and support the formation of small prayer groups. We asked Fox if these are an important factor in the spiritual renaissance he envisions.

Absolutely, he answered. In South American Christianity, the work of justice, liberation, and spirituality is carried on in what are called "base communities": groups of men and women who gather together in each other's homes to tell their stories. The rebirth of a living religion that can bring about the essential change in relationships between "us" and "them," and between humanity and the rest of creation, will emerge from small groups in which we realize that instead of being isolated and in constant competition, we are all interconnected and interdependent. That change will not come from the hierarchy; from the top down. It will come from us, from the bottom up.

In North America, Fox observed, people are turning to prayer and meditation groups, and the rapidly expanding 12-step groups, in order to reawaken their spirituality. In these groups, people gather and tell their stories. In the telling of one's story, Fox says, there is always an experience of the sacred. Everyone's story is sacred and everyone has a story. And in everyone's story there is deep grief and deep joy. Most important, he added, in stories told in complete honesty and letting-go, there is always deep healing. Acceptance, affirmation, non-judgmental listening, unconditional love. Those are the blessings people are looking for, and finding, in small spiritual groups. They are the heart of Matt Fox's Creation Spirituality.

Michelle Boyd

Remembering

RONALD K. NAKASONE

In this deeply felt reflection, a son suffering the problems of aging parents turns to his memories. For "memories cradle our grief and preserve our joy."

I have left any number of times. But this afternoon, peering from this iron rock, I marvel at the beauty of the Island below. Silver-white cumulus clouds drift effortlessly above innumerable green patches of the Koolaus. The patterned strokes of green contrast with the flat blue of the sky. The sweeping sapphire blue water makes the distant horizon seem closer than it really is. I am reminded of Cézanne's "The Sea at L'Estaque."

I am flushed with memories. Idyllic hours were spent swimming, surfing, and defending my castle walls from the rising surf. I searched for sea

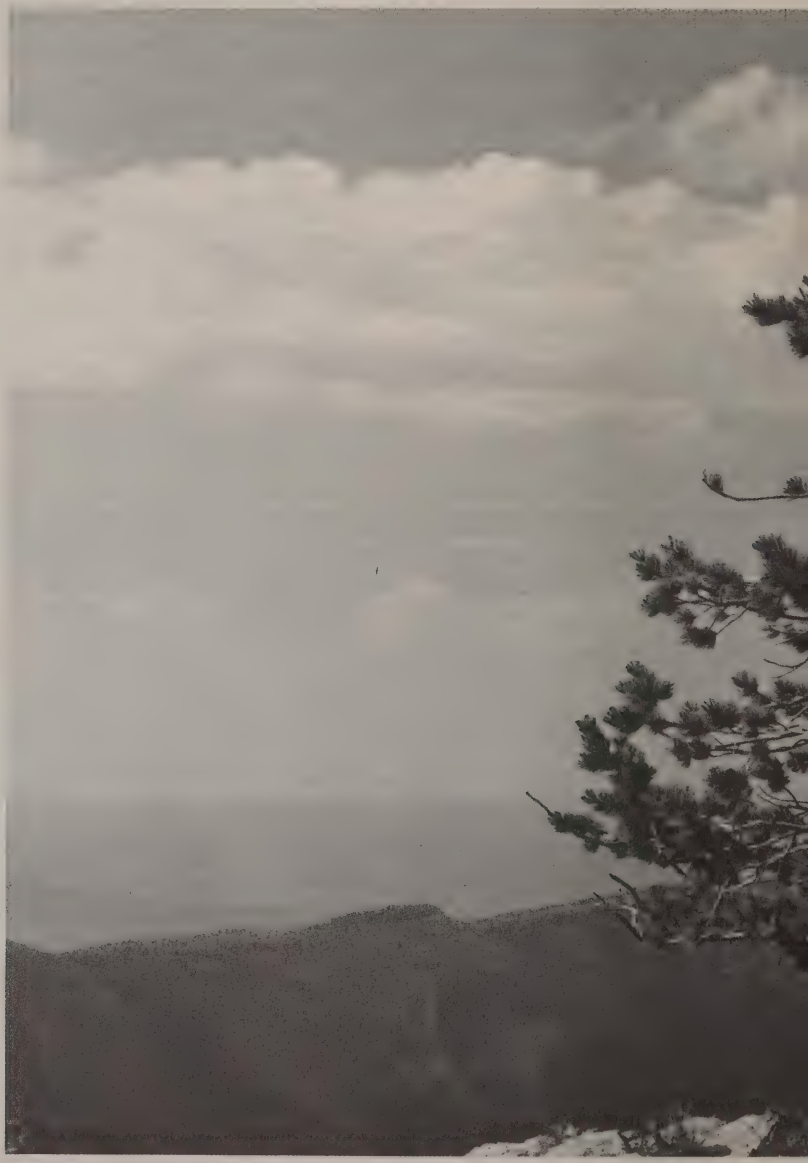
> My parents have not been kind to me these past few months. They have become old. The infirmities of aging have silently crept up on them. They have lost their vigor, their health, and their mind. They have become, in short, dependent on me.

shells and glass floats. Treasures washed up during the night belonged to the first one on the beach. It seemed always so haunting in the soft morning light. Later, I turned my curiosity to the mountains. I loved to hike their ancient trails. The sunlight flickering through the ever moving canopy of leaves quickened images of rushing footsteps.

To be sure, the Island has changed. The multi-storied office and apartment complexes now form another mountain range and invite other kinds of explorers. The spires of progress and prosperity now puncture the once gentle transition from mountain to sea.

Today, I am remembering, because I have passed a milestone in my life. Americans celebrate important events in their lives with birthday parties, commencement exercises, wedding rites and the like. If these cel-

A Buddhist priest, Ron Nakasone teaches philosophy and ethics at the Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. His most recent book is The Ethics of Enlightenment.



Janet Gnall

ebrations, in reality rites of passage, mean anything, I suppose, it marks a change in one's life, and added responsibility. Some rites of passage are unceremoniously thrust upon us.

Americans prepare for the first day of school, for adolescence, for college, for marrying, for parenthood, for middle age, for retirement, and even death. We, however, are not prepared for caring for our elderly and frail parents. For some this passage may be gradual and imperceptible; for others it may be more abrupt. Growing up is, I suppose, never easy.

There is some rage in growing up. My parents have not been kind to me these past few months. They have become old. The infirmities of aging have silently crept up on them. They have lost their vigor, their health, and their mind. They have become, in short, dependent on me. This reversal of roles seems so strange. As a consequence, they have rudely and unexpectedly forced me to refocus my attention to their concerns rather than mine.

In early December my Mother fell and shattered her hip. Neither my Father nor any of her children was able to provide the necessary care she required. She reluctantly agreed to be placed in a nursing home. This was a painful conclusion for all. For my Mother it was a most traumatic decision. On my recent visit, her physical condition deteriorated further. Diabetic, she has lost most of her sight.

The woman I see today is not the woman I know. She is so frail and helpless. I look at her familiar face and I hear her singing as she works in the kitchen preparing dinner. She raises her frail hand, and I see her nimble fingers stringing a ginger lei. I am frustrated that she cannot do more for herself. I am upset, too, that she expects me to do more for her.

About a month later my Father, no doubt, by guilt, poor diet, and stress, suffered a partial blockage of his left carotid artery. He has since made a remarkable recovery. He can now walk. He has regained the use of his hand. However, he still suffers from memory loss and confusion.

I had always thought him to be so strong. The sight of that once powerful man—the one who taught me the alphabet, who by his great strength did much to green the barren flat land of the leeward coast—struggling to control his thoughts was humbling. I began to see more of the grays in life. I think more seriously of my own mortality now.

He remembers more now. He can recall the immediate past with greater fidelity. Remembering has been healing. He knows who he was and what he can be. Remembering brings focus on the past and to the

future in the present. Memories cradle our grief and preserve our joy. As we struggle through life, remembering helps us to keep events in perspective. Remembrance has, I believe, the power to restore a sense of wholeness in being. Remembrance grounds us to the past, instills pride and hope. I too am remembering, because remembering is healing.

I too look to the past and I see my future. I suppose this is what the Sarvasitivadin doctors meant when they proposed that the future exists, because we can have thoughts of it. To remember is to draw upon the future, to remember the future. So many people believe that memory is the dredging up of the past, and especially in a sense of affliction. We recall separations, deaths, and humiliations quite vividly. But to remember the future is a creative power which can hold us together in a painful present and deliver us from an unpleasant past. To remember is to know where we have been and where we might be.

I realized the importance of remembering the future when I met Eagle Man, an Ogalala Sioux medicine man. Even though he shared with his people the bitter memories of oppression and humiliation, he was able to draw strength from his memories of the future.

While demonstrating and explaining the significance of the mother earth spiritual ritual, Eagle Man recited with pride the timeless vision of his nation's past handed down by the "mystic warriors." "The warrior,"

Janet Gnall

Jan Harke writes in the introduction of *Mother Earth Spirituality*, "who feels the great mystery of existence is marked by a profound humility." The warrior understands that the mystery is simply that we are all part of nature and nature is part of us.

Eagle Man wants to share this understanding with all people. This earth which we are dependent on and live on belongs to everyone. Eagle Man envisions a future in which all beings will live with respect and gratitude for mother earth. In his own way, Eagle Man, a Native American, is transforming a bitter and unpromising past into a new future. His vision of the future is drawn from the past. In remembering the past he understands his responsibilities in the present and projects his vision of the future. Like Eagle Man, I believe, we can draw from our future vision to give us confidence and empower us.

I am remembering today. I am remembering, because I need to know my past. Seeing my parents, I conjure warm memories of my childhood. I am a son and they are my parents, because we share common memories. I am remembering the future, because I need this vision to give me the courage to mark this milestone in my life.

The Last Wolf

The last wolf hurried toward me
through the ruined city
and I heard his baying echoes
down the steep smashed warrens
of Montgomery Street and past
the few ruby-crowned highrises
left standing
their lighted elevators useless

Passing the flicking red and green
of traffic signals
baying his way eastward
In the mystery of his wild loping
gait
closer the sounds in the deadly
night
through clutter and rubble of quiet
blocks

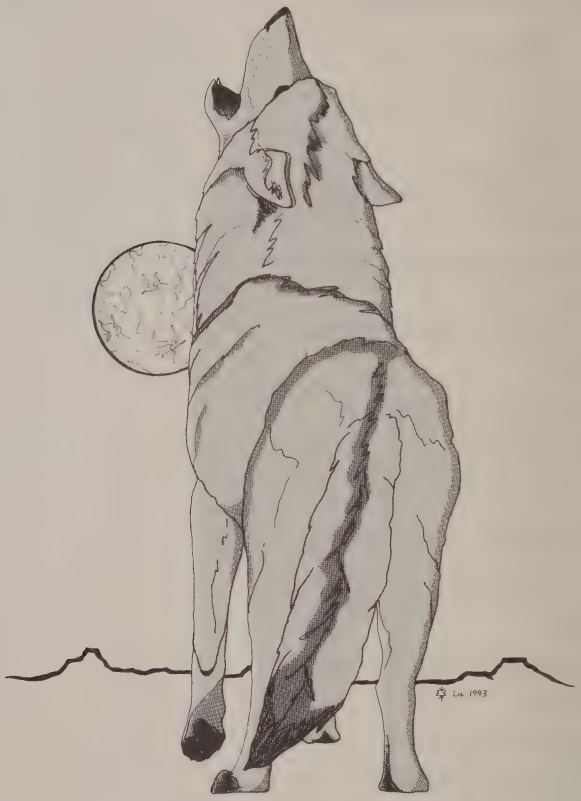
I heard his voice ascending the
hill
and at last his low whine as he
came
floor by empty floor to the room
where I sat
in my narrow bed looking west,
waiting
I heard him snuffle at the door and
I watched

He trotted across the floor
he laid his long gray muzzle
on the spare white spread

"The Last Wolf" is reprinted with the permission of The Animals' Agenda, Box 5234, Westport, Ct 06881.

and his eyes burned yellow
his small dotted eyebrows quivered

Yes, I said.
I know what they have done.
Mary TallMountain



Lisa Smith

Three Steps to the Prayer of the Heart

JAN BRESKY

"The Great rabbis would prepare to pray by praying for one hour." Couldn't we begin with five minutes a day?

Most of us have been trained in the set written prayers of our religious traditions; but few, if any, have been trained in the prayer of the heart. It is erroneously assumed that our ability to speak directly to God needs no development or discussion.

True sharing with God can be a difficult process for many people. There seem to be enormous obstacles to achieving oneness with our God. Some believe they are unworthy of such an honor. (But did God not make us, the human species, the crown of Creation? God loves us, and desires to help us.) Others are reluctant to pray because they are not sure God exists. Still others claim that God does exist but is not powerful enough to change things. Prayer gives us a direct experience of God and it is during that experience we gain true knowledge of Divine existence and power. God has the power to do anything but may or may not choose to answer our prayers in the way that we wish. In other words, God hears all prayers and answers them; but sometimes the answer is, "No."

Still others may wish to pray, but never find the time to do so. To them I suggest that they budget five minutes a day for individual prayer. Five minutes seems like a brief period of time, but it is the beginning of a truly spiritual life. By being "in touch" with God even for this short amount of time, the other aspects of the religious life, service, study and sacrifice, will begin to make greater sense and fulfill their proper perspective. Soon you will want to increase the five minutes to ten, then fifteen, and maybe even thirty minutes of prayer daily.

Rabbi Jan Bresky was the spiritual leader of the Jewish Media Relations Council and Congregation Bnai Emmunah (People of Faith), in Dunedin, FL. He passed away at a much-too-early age after an arduous four-year-long battle with leukemia, during which he continued to teach and write about God, prayer and ethics.

But how do we pray? What do we do? Let me suggest the following three steps:

STEP I: *Relax and Prepare*

Jewish tradition teaches that the great rabbis would prepare to pray by praying for one hour. This means that there needs to be preparation before one launches into prayer. This preparation has two factors: relaxation and agenda.

It is difficult, if not impossible to pray if your mind is concerned with mundane thoughts: Who will take out the trash? When will the oil in the car be changed? So too, prayer is difficult if we are so busy that our minds and bodies are "racing" while we attempt to pray.

We must take some time to relax before we pray. We must discipline our minds to turn off the unimportant elements of life when we attempt to communicate with the Divine.

What is the purpose of that sharing with God? What are we trying to learn? What shall we ask for? What blessing shall we thank God for? Sometimes it is good to mentally prepare an agenda of two or three items we wish to discuss with God. In this way our prayers become more focused.

STEP II: *Let Go and Let God*

This expression, which I first heard from Dr. Robert Schuller, has great merit. The most successful people in the world realize they cannot "do it all." As a result, they delegate power and authority to others to achieve the task. We cannot control many of the elements in our lives. We must realize that our personal plans are subservient to God's master plan. All this makes it necessary for us to give over to God the authority to change our lives. Surrender is one of the most difficult things for us to achieve in attempting to live a spiritual life. "O Lord, not my empire, but your Kingdom."

After we relax and set our agenda and empower God to change our lives, we are now ready to empty our heart and soul to God. We may use words. We may use gestures. We may simply think thoughts. Every person communicates differently. As long as you are reaching God and you will know when you are, you are doing "the right thing."

Janet Gnall

STEP III: *Listen*

The main prayer of Judaism, the *Shema*, taken from the book of Deuteronomy, proclaims, "Hear O Israel." The reason it says "Hear" is probably because Jews, like most people, do not listen. Far too often, we complete our speech, words and ideas to God, and then shut off the prayer.

Prayer is communication. Good communication is a two-way street. We must listen as well as speak.

It is very unpopular in this age of psychoanalysis, psychosis and charlatanism to say that God communicates with us directly or even indirectly.

The fact is . . . God does.

God will speak to us . . . any of us.

It may be a flash of an idea that comes to mind, a new insight. Yes, it may even be in rare cases, direct human language; but none of this can be achieved if we are not listening. It is therefore necessary to reserve some time of silence at the end of prayer. This is God's opportunity to speak directly to us.

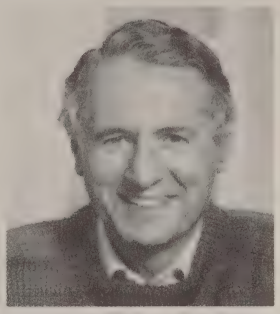
* * * * *

Prayer is direct communication with God. Through it we gain greater strength, courage, faith, hope and insight. It must be practiced every day without fear, or excuse, for at least five minutes. Prayer is the beginning of a deeper, more fulfilling spiritual life.

Relax, formulate your agenda, let go and let God touch you. Empty your heart and soul to God, listen for God's response.

Do this and then watch your life grow and blossom.

Empowering People: An Interview with Arthur Caliandro



A member of the Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer, Dr. Arthur Caliandro is Senior Minister at Marble Collegiate Church on 5th Avenue in New York City. The 46th minister in a succession that began in 1628, he followed Norman Vincent Peale, whose best selling book, The Power of Positive Thinking *became a classic. Dr. Caliandro is the recipient of two honorary doctorates and was named Clergyman of the Year in 1991. In addition to serving on numerous boards, founding groups that help people from all walks of life, writing sermons that are broadcast on radio and TV, he wrote* Make Your Life Count, *a book widely acclaimed as an unsurpassed guide to a more meaningful and more successful life.*

Fellowship in Prayer's *editor, Mary Ford-Grabowsky, interviewed Dr. Caliandro in his lovely, spacious office at Marble Collegiate Church, where he quickly lived up to his reputation as an impassioned and inspiring speaker.*

Q: Norman Vincent Peale once referred to you as a "people builder." What did he mean by that?

A. I've discovered that the best thing I can do is to affirm and enable and give freedom to people. Everybody here at Marble is free, free to use their gifts. If somebody has the ability to make something happen I try to recognize and encourage that person so they can be who they are.

Every human being needs to be loved, needs to be valued, needs to be encouraged. That is the basic foundation that we have here at the Church. Just the plain practice of hospitality. I care for you, you're important, you're special. We try to relate more on the level of the heart than the head because we don't nurture and help each other if we only deal with the intellect. We've learned that as people are nurtured they feel valued; then they're in a position to appreciate the needs of others and will respond to the challenge of involvement in the life of the community. I've been overwhelmed at the numbers of people at Marble who volunteer to sleep in shelters run by not-for-profit organizations to help

Brooks Walsh

the homeless. They get there at nine or ten o'clock at night, converse with the homeless and have breakfast with them the next morning, then go on to work.

Q. Are women emerging at Marble Collegiate?

A. We've had women on the board for five years. I remember my own process, "Who can the first women be?" It was important to me and some of us here that those first women be very strong people, have something to contribute but not be overwhelming in their strength. And I've yet to hear one complaint about either one of them. They are very competent, very strong, very gracious, very feminine.

Q. What do you think women want today?

A. I think that women want and need power. They want to be womanly and female, with all of the "niceties" of that, the softness, and yet they want to be recognized as full human beings who are equal, who are as good as their male counterpart. There is pain that women are not there

> Attitude may be the only area in life where we have absolute freedom of choice . . . We really serve the world best if we choose to have a loving attitude.

yet and they know they're not there yet and it's frustrating. The church has a hard time with this. It has been a male dominated society since day one. The old testament is male dominated. The canon of the scripture was assembled by men. The rulers and elders of the church have been men, and only in the last generation have women begun to assume a leadership role. It's exciting to see what's happening in this church.

Q. What do you see as the real problem for men today?

A. Identity. Most of the men I talk to who come to this church are struggling with the issue of identity. They know that they want to be more open and more inclusive of who they are. They have a higher level of respect for the feminine, for the feminine parts of themselves that need to be expressed. They are interested in learning how to cry and know that because they haven't been able to cry they have missed something and have a lot of pent-up feeling in them. On the other hand, there are

men who have a sort of John Wayne complex, a need for distance, for the man to be strong, to be dominant. They'll say that strength is not crying, not feeling.

Q. Tell me about your program, "I Have A Dream." It's quite an example of people-building!

A. It's a program started in Harlem by Eugene Lange, a wealthy New York businessman. He promised to educate any child who would finish high school, guaranteed them college tuition and inspired a lot of other wealthy people across the country to do the same. We were the first church to do the same. We raised about a quarter of a million dollars to fund this program. We are in the fourth year and it's very difficult. If we get 30 of the 70 through high school and 20 through college, we will have done something significant, because the drop-out rate in that part of Harlem is 50 to 70 per cent. The members of the church have been extraordinary in trying to relate to the kids. There are many who have bonded with them in mentoring/friendship relationships.

Q. What are the spiritual needs of the people in this Church?

A. This is a church that can be classified as a re-entry church. The majority of people who come here have been away from the church for a long time and most of them were injured by the church when they were younger, abused with guilt trips, with criticism, with rigidity. Now when they discover in themselves an interest and hunger for something spiritual, for God, for faith, they feel Marble is a safe place to come to, because they're not going to get beaten up emotionally or spiritually.

People essentially don't know how to pray and they want to learn how to pray. People want faith and as you know, you don't get faith by reading about it; it's a contagious thing.

Also, there is a continuing desire for learning how to improve relationships because that's where most of our problems come from. Our sadness, our happiness, whatever, comes from our ability or inability to get along with other people, so we gear a lot to that in various ways. For example, we have a lot of small groups, Share and Prayer Groups. Also we refer a lot of people to therapy. Not everybody needs therapy but everybody can be helped by it. We probably have several hundred people who are or have been in counseling and have found that good therapy releases them and enables them to grow spiritually. Unless some of those

Jackie Beckett

internal, emotional knots are addressed and untied, we keep on doing a spiritual white-wash, *praying* to solve a problem instead of *solving* it.

On occasion I preach on the text, "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free." I think what Jesus was saying there is you can know the fullness of who you are, you can know the depth of your human experience, you can be in touch with the whole range of feeling—your anger, your depression, your frustration, your temptation, your loneliness, your despair—and as you relate to the full spectrum of the human experience, you open to the movement of the spirit. As we discover ourselves, we discover what our truth is, and that truth sets us free. For example: a number of years ago I was going through a very difficult time. On the surface, things were going well with my life—family, children, work, friendships, health—but something was wrong inside; I was dead inside. I had tried a whole series of different kinds of prayers—but none of them solved the problem. I think they helped get me to the next place, though, where the spirit intercedes for us. One June morning, on vacation in Maine, I read the story of Jesus and the blind man. Jesus asked the blind man, "What can I do for you?" and the blind man answered, "That I might receive my sight." I had a very specific sense at that point that the blind man's prayer was my prayer, "That I might receive my sight." It was very clear that this was the prayer I was to pray. June, July, August, September, October, November were the worst months of my life. I went through unbelievable hell. My second open heart operation. Fear that I was going to die and that everything I had worked for was going to collapse. I did not know, as I look back on it now, that I was getting in touch with my own truth, that my prayer was being answered. I had to go through the fires to find this truth, my personhood, my feelings.

Q. You wrote a pamphlet about the value of a loving attitude. Please tell me about that.

A. One of my major themes is attitude. Attitude may be the only area in life where we have absolute freedom of choice. The attitude isn't *everything*. It doesn't solve all our problems, but it points in whatever direction we are going. Our attitude creates an aura around us, an energy field. If it's positive—if it's confident, if it's joyous, if it's hopeful, if it's optimistic—that's what we project to others. If it's negative—if it's demeaning—that projects, and it comes back to us.

We can be forced to do many things, but we cannot be forced to have an attitude that we do not want to have. We have absolute choice on this. Of all the psychologizing that's been done—and I've studied a lot of psychology—the bottom line is what we choose, which direction we choose to take, what the position of the mind will be with whatever. We really serve the world best if we choose to have a loving attitude.

Our Hunger for Connection

SHEILA MORGAN

If we're "looking for love in all the wrong places," we're failing to see that we already have what we're looking for.

What is there about connection that we hunger for? What do we want to be connected to? Or what are we disconnected from? There is a fundamental longing in all of us to "come home." To be in that space and time where all is well, nothing is lacking, everything and everyone is in its place. We know "this is what matters, what's true." Our separateness disappears. We are complete. When we are disconnected from that place there's a kind of tension, something lacking, things are "not quite right." We're incomplete. This hunger is as primal as our hunger for food or water, and as vital as our need to breathe. What's it all about?

It would seem that if we long to be connected we must be separate. And indeed, we appear to be. We're born into this world fully connected to everything in the universe, thinking that there's no difference between us and our mothers or us and the crib. Soon we discover our separateness—mother and crib are over there and we're in here. Our socialization begins, our training to become individual personalities with healthy egos. We learn that we belong to this family, this race, this nation. We learn that, I in my own little flesh suit am separate from you in your little flesh suit. We've got boundaries.

We develop talents, traits, and roles that keep the boundaries in place and make us different from each other and then define ourselves by the differences. We say, "I'm a doctor, a parent, a writer, a democrat, a hard worker, a romantic." We have an identity. Our individual personality, with ego (healthy or unhealthy) at the helm, is set for life. We know who we are. We hang out with people who fit in with who we think we are, giving us an illusion of comfort. But the lines are drawn. We're separate. Separateness is lonely. We feel incomplete. So we begin a lifelong journey searching for completion. We try to connect more deeply. We fall in

Sheila Morgan, who lives on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, works as a psychotherapist with individuals, couples and groups. "I used to see us as human beings on a spiritual journey," she says, "but that's shifted. Now I see us as spiritual beings on a human journey. And every moment is sacred."

love, get married, join a group, a cause, a church, a street gang, a team, searching for a place to call home. But home is often a long way from home.

Now and then we connect when, in some blessed moment our heart opens, to another being or to the sky, or the earth. And once in a rare blue moon, to ourselves. But since most of our searching is, as the song says, "looking for love in all the wrong places," we often miss the connection.

Perhaps we miss it because we're already connected. Perhaps our separation is an illusion. Maybe we're no more separate than a wave is separate from the ocean.

Despite the apparent separateness of things at the surface level, at a deeper level everything is a seamless extension of everything else. Quantum physicist David Bohm calls this deeper level of reality the "implicate order." This implicate order is enfolded or hidden in the "explicate order," which is the ordinary surface reality that we know.

We can see a simple mini example of this at the checkout counter in a supermarket. On the items we purchased are swirls that don't seem to

Janet Gnall

mean anything, but enfolded, or hidden, in these swirls are numbers that do mean something. We can't see the numbers with our eye. But a laser scanner can "see" beneath the surface of the meaningless swirls into the meaningful order of the numbers.

The connection we're looking for can't be seen by our eyes either. The Persian poet Rumi knew this. He writes:

> Our eyes do not see you,
> but we have this excuse: Eyes
> see surface, not reality,
> though we keep hoping,
> in this lovely place.

Since most of us don't experience ourselves as subatomic particles, it's a big leap, between the idea, or concept, of interconnection and the experience of interconnection. Just like the leap between the idea of swimming and the experience of swimming. Now here comes the exciting part! We're going into the water!

Bohm also found that the experience reported by mystics throughout the ages—feelings of cosmic oneness with the universe, a sense of unity with all life—sound very much like a description of—guess what? The implicate order! He suggests that perhaps mystics are somehow able to see beyond ordinary reality into the deeper realities. Science and the Mystics connect!

The plot thickens!

Here's a marvelous description of one of those experiences from consciousness researcher, R. M. Bucke:

> Now came a period of rapture so intense that the universe stood still, as if amazed at the unutterable majesty of the spectacle. Only one in all the infinite universe! The All-loving, the Perfect One . . . In that same wonderful moment of what might be called supernal bliss, came illumination. I saw with intense inward vision the atoms or molecules, of which seemingly the universe is composed . . . rearranging themselves, as the cosmos (in its continuous, everlasting life), passes from order to order. What joy when I saw there was no break in the chain—not a link left out—everything in its place and time. Worlds, systems, all blended into one harmonious whole.

Is this experience for mystics alone? How is it that we ordinary folks miss it most of the time? Maybe we miss it because we focus on the surface reality of forms.

Perhaps the trick is to go beyond the forms, beyond the forms of nature to the deeper mystery; beyond the forms of love to the truth of our heart; beyond the forms of what we call God, to experience the all-pervading Mystery.

> Something opens our wings. Something
> makes boredom and hurt disappear.
> Someone fills the cup in front of us:
> We taste only sacredness.

That from Rumi again.

We come upon it when we listen to music. What is the music? Is it the black notes on the page, the hands moving across the keyboard, the bow touching the strings, the musician playing the piece, the composer who wrote it, the shape of our ear that can receive the sound? None of these can explain, even remotely, the awesome mystery of what we experience when those separate parts come together and touch our soul, nor can any language capture it. At the surface reality we call it listening to music. But at the deeper reality—what? Surely it's a holy miracle.

Are we ordinary folks also holy miracles? I think so. Sometimes we behave as such. But usually our small ego self runs around thinking it's running the show. On the surface it appears to, but a deeper level, hidden by the ordinary, is the extraordinary—the larger Divine Self connected to and part of everything.

What if . . . What if we began to identify with that Divine Self instead of our small ego self? What if we let our Divine Self be the captain, and our little ego self be first mate? Could we trust the winds of grace to bring us home safe and sound? What would that mean?

Well, right off the bat, it would mean that we could stop being afraid. We'd know we don't have to steer the ship alone. There's plenty of help. We need only ask. We'd have to quiet down a bit though, so we could hear the answers. That might be hard for some of us.

Could we bear to let into our hearts all the suffering and pain of the world? Wouldn't it kill us? Our little ego self, yes. Indeed it would. That's why we close our heart, to numb ourselves to pain. So we won't die from it.

But the Divine Self is more spacious. It has room for everything, good and bad, right and wrong, pain and joy, all of it. All of it. It knows that suffering, finally, serves us well. Aeschylus speaks beautifully to this: "In

our sleep pain, which we cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our despair, against our own will, comes wisdom, through the awful grace of God." The Divine Self knows that pain is only another slice of life, just as necessary, and as temporary, as joy.

Could we trust the Divine Self to lead us out of fear, and into joy? To fill us with wisdom enough to let go of editing and selecting little bits of life, and simply open to all of it, the way it is, in any given moment? To open to ourselves just the way we are—now?

Since the cosmic joke seems to be that we're already connected, we might as well start laughing. Since we already have what we're looking for, we might as well start dancing with it. And since the Divine Self is the *only* one who knows the score, we might as well trust it to write the music, and let that little rascal, ego, sing the song.

Tom Dunham

Lisa Smith

A Native American Prayer

O Great Spirit,
Whose voice I hear in the winds,
and whose breath gives life to all the world,
hear me! I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes
ever behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.
Make me wise so that I may understand the things
you have taught my people.
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.
I seek strength, not to be greater than another,
but to fight my greatest enemy—myself.
Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight
eyes.
So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.

A Celtic Prayer

This morning, I pray that
the flame of God's love
may burn in my heart
and in the hearts
of all I meet today.

I pray that no envy or
malice, no hatred or fear,
may smother the flame.
I pray that indifference
and apathy, contempt and
pride, may not pour like
cold water on the fire.

Instead may the spark
of God's love light the
love in my heart, that it
may burn brightly through
the day.

And may I warm those who are
lonely, whose hearts are
cold and lifeless, so that
all may know
the comfort of God's love.

Rock Ritual I

ROBERT O'ROURKE

A beloved FiP *writer evokes awe and reverence for all creation in his unique and inspiring series of "Rock Rituals."*

Alfred Tennyson once held a small flower in his hand and exclaimed that if he could fathom that tiny bit of creation he would come to a keener sense of his life and who he was, and even more, a deeper understanding of God! Tennyson's awe of that little flower contained the belief that the Spirit-of-Creation flows in and through all things . . . a breeze, a cloud, a flower, a rock, insects, trees, earth, sun, moon, you, me! He shared a reverence with Matthew Fox who holds that nature looks on each of us with affection and has the capacity for Divine revelation to all who possess a sense of wonder. With this view in mind may I propose a ritual with a rock? A rock, because they are millennia old and have experienced a variety of life forms during their long sojourn on earth. Rocks, like small flowers, are wise.

Hold your rock in the hollow of your hand. See in imagination its beginning in the world . . . How it was born . . . The panorama of life this rock has been present to . . . Sit for awhile and get to know your rock . . . After a time ask those questions most personal to you about life . . . death . . . self . . . others . . . God. Hear the answers resounding in your heart that the mind could never understand . . . Listen to the mystery revealed . . . Reflect on the moment . . . the wonder . . . Continue to gaze at your rock. Is there a special song it sings? A feeling it conveys? A wisdom it shares?

In appreciation, thank your rock for any message it has given and place it in an available spot where it may again speak to you. Or, carry it in your pocket. Hold it often in your hand and heart . . . a companion . . . a teacher . . . your reflection of life . . . a symbol of God. Make no apology for wonder.

A writer, poet, and sculptor living in Colorado, Bob O'Rourke has published 12 "Rock Rituals" in Fellowship in Prayer.

Janet Gnall

Quilting

JEROME B. ROBBEN

Creating a life is just like quilting. We take "little bits and pieces of things we'd throw away" and transform them into a thing of beauty and new purpose.

Since my earliest years, Grandmother Anna was an embodiment of wisdom. She came to this country from Poland and had in her repertoire of stories and axioms an exciting mixture of Old World and American subjects. These were handed out like sweets—to be savored and anticipated—whenever I visited or stayed with her.

One example has remained with me these many years. I was twelve years old and spending the summer with Grandmother as usual. Every afternoon around three o'clock we sat quietly on the huge porch which ran across the entire front of the house. Grandmother rocked gently and I sat on the porch swing. We'd sing old songs and she would tell me stories about her youth and about relatives I never met. This particular day, however, she was very quiet-gazing out across the fields and looking very peaceful and serene.

"What are you doing, Grandmother?" I asked.

"I'm quilting, little one." She smiled at me, then turned to gaze back at the vastness of corn growing just beyond the fence.

"But Grandmother, you're just sitting there."

"No, little one, I'm quilting. Most times I'm quilting, even when I just sit."

My consternation must have shown, for she continued to explain:

"Quilting is just taking little bits and pieces of things you'd throw away or you might think were unimportant or worthless at first, and sewing them together. Folks use things up and think that means they aren't worth anything, but that isn't true at all. Everything is good, little one. Everything serves a purpose, even if it's not the one we think it should serve. I put together pieces of old shirts, skirts long worn, all sorts of things like that and put them into a quilt. They serve a new purpose and form a new thing of beauty.

"Live longer, little one, and you will see that life is like that. Times come when we think something is worn out or empty. We can toss it

Jerome Robben is a writer living in St. Louis, MO.

away, or we can make it a part of a quilt. Take a section of it and sew it into place. Simple as that.

"Many times these things belong to someone precious to us. And that gives them a very special value. When we put them into our quilt they always remind us of those people. And best of all, when we finish the quilt we're working on, we can gift someone with it. Then all the precious memories and good feelings intensify because we give them to someone else to experience. And it is handed down so that the memories live on and the people they remind us of live on, too, in those memories."

"Kind of like an heirloom, Grandmother?"

"Like a treasure, little one. A Treasure you can make in your mind. Take your memories and your feelings and sew them together to make a quilt—bright and cheerful and warm. Remember the people you've met, the pets you've hugged, the victories you achieved, the touches you've received and those you've given. Take melodies of songs and melodies of creatures, songs of the rain and the stream, and of the rustling corn. Remember the surprises. The faces, the hands of those who love you. The gifts received and the ones wished for. Trees in bloom, flowers that suddenly pop out in brilliant colors; the sweet smell of honeysuckle, the squeal of a baby pig anxious for its mother. Remember the vibrating purr

Tom Dunham

of our cat, the steady beat of your mother's heart. God has given you many things to put into your quilt; and will continue to bless you with countless more.

"Today I'm putting up pieces of memories I have of your grandfather and how he plowed this land with love. I have many pieces for my quilt, little one, for he spent many years nurturing this farm and bringing in crops to delight the soul. Look at the corn. It dances with his memory!

Take your memories and your feelings and sew them together to make a quilt—bright and cheerful and warm. Remember the people you've met, the pets you've hugged, the victories you achieved, the touches you've received and those you've given.

"Quilts are things of beauty that only we can make. It takes time; it takes a keen eye and a loving heart to gather up the pieces and arrange them in a design. But, oh my! what a joy the finished quilt is!"

Many years have passed since that day—and Grandmother, herself, has become a part of many of my spirit-quilts. Her techniques remain as fresh as the day she explained them to me: save bits and pieces of experiences and sew them together into a quilt; search for the good and the potential in all things. Sound advice for quilting—and for living our lives.

From Prayers to Prayer

KAREN RUSHEN

Two minutes with a tiny old woman in a South Korean temple inspired a quest that has lasted a lifetime.

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to the Editor, 291 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ 08542. You need not be a professional writer. Just describe a spiritual experience that made a difference in your life or in someone else's life.

When I was thirteen I had an experience that changed the way I looked at God from that day forward. At that time, my family and I lived in South Korea, where my father, an engineer, was helping to open a new factory. My mother, who loved to learn about history and art, insisted upon frequent family excursions to the various local Buddhist temples where, guidebook in hand, she would take in all the details of the temple art and architecture, explaining to us the meanings of the bronze and carved imagery adorning the temple gates and buildings.

Being thirteen, I loved to exercise my independence on such occasions, wandering a safe distance to savor the situation alone with my own thoughts. In this way I one day happened upon a small side building of a local temple in which a tiny old woman was praying.

At first I didn't give her much attention, as I wandered to the front of the room to get a good look at the bronze Buddha image surrounded by offerings of incense, fruit, flowers and sweet cakes. Yet when I glanced at the woman, kneeling before the image, my heart skipped a beat. She was so caught up in the act of praying that her face, its features softened in an expression of deep joy and quiet ecstasy, literally glowed. Though her hands moved slowly in graceful gestures of what appeared to be supplication, there seemed to be about her a solid confidence, and such a sure intimacy between her and the deity before her that I couldn't help but be speechless with wonder.

Raised in the Catholic tradition, I had made the smug assumption that God only spoke to Christian people and only answered Christian prayers, even though the nuns who had instructed me assured us chil-

dren that God loved all good people everywhere no matter what beliefs they held. Still, this woman was enlivened by God in a way I had never seen before—her belief looked so deep, so certain, so sweet that I felt an ache of envy go through me. How I had struggled with the boredom and repetition of prayer and praying, and yet here was a woman who had somehow, in some manner broken through and found in praying a rich, living dialogue, and an intimate relationship with her God.

At some point, this little Korean woman caught sight of me, staring at her in so intrusive a manner, and a warm smile spread over her face. She beckoned for me to join her, and, placing her hands in the posture of prayer, gestured towards the Buddha image with a look of knowing confidence. I was totally undone by embarrassment yet felt a desperate desire to in some way experience what this woman experienced, so, after looking around me to be sure I wasn't being watched, I knelt self-consciously in front of the bronze image and tried to form a petition.

I prayed something like this: God, don't strike me dead if kneeling before this Buddhist image is some form of Christian heresy. Please see that my intentions are sincere, that this woman knows you in a way that I want to know you, so that your knowledge radiates from within me and all over me, so that I really *know* you, not just in formal prayers and doctrine, but intimately, like a good and well-loved friend.

No feelings of ecstasy swept me off my feet, but in my heart I felt a tiny warm stirring, not unlike a smile, that was the beginning of something between God and me: an understanding and a quest.

I wish I could end in saying that I have completed my quest, but I have a long, long way to go in my journey. Still, I had a glimpse of my destination in the face of that small Korean woman, and that knowledge still fires my heart and pushes me onward.

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, *291 Witherspoon St, Princeton, NJ 08542-3227, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.*

Dear Angela,

Would you please share with us your thoughts concerning feelings and their expression? Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ambivalent

Dear Ambivalent,

Thank you for asking about such an important topic. Once again, I am deeply relieved to discover that I am not the only soul on the whole planet who feels a bit wishy-washy when it comes to feelings and their expression. One thing is very clear, however: before we can express feelings, we need to feel them.

Feelings flow. They are natural and organic. Feelings are not bad or good, they just *are*. Whether we notice it or not, we are always feeling our feelings. Unfelt feelings may lead to a bellyache or a headache or other type of dis-ease. If we feel sad but don't allow any tears, we may sniff our sniffles out for an entire week with a headcold. Since we cannot stop the flow of feelings, it would serve us well to stop judging those little critters as much as we do. Labeling some feelings "O.K. to feel" and others "not O.K." is another common pitfall. For instance, there is a common belief that feeling anger is simply not nice. I am a firm believer in the inevitability of anger. I believe in the well-placed growl and the

unsquelched bark. The other day when I returned home from a stroll, I spotted a uniformed U.S. postal employee walking through the middle of my very own front yard. I began barking. The postal employee left my yard in the wag of a tail. It felt refreshing to bark at someone about something. Barking cleared my head, cleared the air, and my front yard. But it wasn't fair, because the postperson didn't deserve my free expression of my snarlies. Keep in mind that you get the most mileage by snarling at the situation—not the soul—you are feeling snarly at. There is less long-term reward in snarling randomly at anything in front of you. In a pinch I have been known to snarl at my own shadow.

There are moments when I stand up unequivocally for full and complete expression of one's feelings immediately to anyone available. One instance is hunger. When I'm feeling hungry and the bowl is empty, I always express my hunger fully to any beloved I see.

Another instance where I believe in full expression of feelings is when my buddy wants to rub my chest and I don't feel like curling up and settling down. When I feel like pacing back and forth and barking by myself in the basement, choosing to be honest about it is a difficult choice for me to make. I don't want to hurt my friend's feelings when I express my own. Sometimes expressing our feelings can be hurtful, so each of us must decide what is best for all concerned in a given moment. Honesty may indeed be the best policy. On the other hand, we may be equally correct in keeping our feelings to ourselves.

We may also be so shy that speaking our deepest feelings may be beyond what we feel we can safely manage. Being a shy soul myself, I know how difficult it can be to express all of those warm, soft feelings we have for another. I have deep feelings for my buddy; I just don't want to *discuss* it. I cannot bear to share all that's in my heart. For all of us who would rather pace back and forth in the basement by ourselves than to have an "I love you" leave our lips, I offer this: you can create your own sacred language of love or borrow mine. This language is specifically for the sincere but shy of heart. For example, five vigorous wags means "I've missed you." Three licks on the nose means "I love you." As a shy soul, I have found the sacred language of love a real blessing when life has required honest expression of feelings but I have felt too shy to say them.

In closing, I leave you all with my final and firm parables of feeling.

1. Feelings are not bad or good, they just *are*.
2. All living souls feel feelings. They come with the territory. Relax and

Michelle Boyd

enjoy them, or don't relax and enjoy them—whichever will be more fun for you.

3. When expressing feelings, honesty is the best policy except when it isn't.
4. With feelings, there is a time to wag and a time to weep, a time to keep silence and a time to bark.

Faithfully,
Angela

Encountering God

HOUSTON SMITH

Hindus believe that since we have different temperaments, we need to take different approaches to God. Is the right path for you the way of knowledge, the way of love, the way of service or meditation?

The deepest yearnings of which I am consciously aware have always been religious. I consider the religious impulse to be a part of the human makeup; the search for cosmic understanding is as much a part of the religious impulse as is the search for cosmic belonging. In my case, though, early conditioning doubtless contributed to the strength of the drive, for my parents were missionaries in China and I grew up in a devoutly religious home.

Because we were the only Westerners in our small Chinese town, I was imprinted by my parental role models. When I came to America for college I assumed that it was to obtain credentials for returning to China as a missionary in my own right. The dynamism of the West soon changed that prospect, however. Central Methodist College boasted only six hundred students, and the population of Fayette, Missouri, was less than three thousand, but compared with small-town China it was exciting to

> In my best moments I am drawn to . . . God as moth to flame, and at such times I do not know whether my happiness is the rarest or the commonest thing on earth, for all earthly things seem to reflect it.

the point of extinguishing all thoughts of returning to the Orient. My religious impulse remained intact, however, so I decided that instead of being a missionary I would be a minister.

A second vocational shift occurred during my junior year in college,

A distinguished teacher, lecturer and film maker, Houston Smith has devoted much of his energy to building bridges between the East and the West. Among his books is the classic, The Religions of Man, *which has sold over two million copies. He holds seven honorary degrees and his films on world religions have all won international awards. Professor Smith's article is reprinted with permission from* For the Love of God, *Benjamin Shield, Ed., New World Library, San Rafael, CA.*

Janet Gnall

when the intellect became real for me. A brilliant and charismatic philosophy professor deserves much of the credit, but I can actually date the night the conversion occurred. During a meeting of our philosophy club my excitement had been mounting all evening, and as we walked back to our dormitory my mind seemed to explode from within. Old walls were shattered, and beyond them there was nothing between me and the Infinite. I wonder if I slept at all that night. I would have not recognized the words then, but that night I discovered I was a *jnana yogin*, one whose primary approach to God is through knowledge (more on this point later). Almost at once I shifted my vocational plans toward teaching.

The intellectual excitement I felt continued during my graduate years at the University of Chicago, but my work there in philosophy and religion focused, as had my undergraduate program, exclusively on the West, so it was only after I started teaching that I discovered that spiritual wisdom was not a Western monopoly. This occurred first through the writings and then through the friendship of Gerald Heard and his intellectual partner, Aldous Huxley. I discovered the mystics, and because the mystics speak a universal language, their writing led me successively through the Vedanta, Buddhism, and Sufism, spending roughly a decade at each stop. At no point on this journey did I feel that I was leaving anything behind, least of all Christianity, for after Asia had opened my eyes I discovered there were Jewish and Christian mystics, too. My pilgrimage simply confirmed the same essential truths by revealing them in different idioms.

My relationship with God through my mid-twenties was cast in a Protestant, pietistic mold wherein God was approached through a personal, love-and-service relationship with Christ. I continue to honor that mode and to work on it in part. But, in addition, the Hindu doctrine of the four yogas—the notion that people are of different spiritual temperaments and therefore will approach God in different ways: *jnanis* through knowledge, *bhaktis* through love, *karmic* types through service, and *rajic* types through meditation—freed me to see that there were other channels through which spiritual energies may flow. My personal relationship with Christ, though real, was not very intense, whereas thoughts of God could hold me spellbound for an entire night.

Such *jnanic* knowledge is apt to be misunderstood by those who have not experienced it—by those whose yogic strengths lie elsewhere. It has

Brooks Walsh

nothing to do with quantity of information or logical dexterity. It is rather that thoughts, for the *jnanic*, possess a body of sorts, a three-dimensional substantiality that makes thoughts real in ways they are not for other people. Plato's ideas, for example—the Good, the True, and the Beautiful—for the *jnanic* are not the empty abstractions that others take them for. They are almost palpably real. And their reality excites; they all but dance and sing . . .

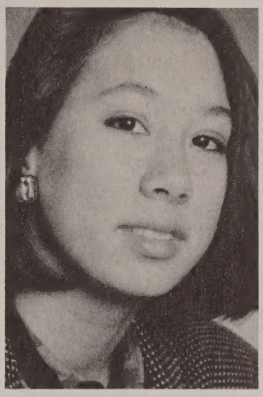
Socrates said that to know the good is to do it. St. Paul disagreed, but he was a different temperamental type—a *bhakti* rather than a *jnani* yogin—so knowing was not the same for the two men.

This all relates to God, for though I have not used the word, I have been speaking of nothing else. God is the Good, the True, the Beautiful—and Power and Mystery, we should add—fused so completely that the five are not five but one. In my best moments I am drawn to that God as moth to flame, and at such times I do not know whether my happiness is the rarest or the commonest thing on earth, for all earthly things seem to reflect it. But I cannot hold onto it. When those grace-filled moments arrive, it does not seem strange to be so happy, but in retrospect I wonder how such gold of Eden could have been mine.

It is easy to make too much of direct mystical disclosures. Desert stretches provide opportunities for growth that are as important as mountaintop experiences, and theologians assure us that souls can be established in an abiding relationship with God without being sensibly aware of God's presence. The goal is not altered states but altered traits. Aldous Huxley's observation that the task of life is to overcome the fundamental human disability of egoism comes in here, for every step we take in overcoming that is in God's direction.

Song Of Myself

JULIE R. LEEGWATER-KIM



I have been asked often
which nese I am
Japanese?
or Chinese?
foolish asker,
how mistaken you are.
Two continents claim my genes
the homes of Van Gogh
and Kyung Wha Chung
are my own
I live at the confluence of the
Danube and the Yangtze
My blood runs proudly in the
Taedong and Rhine
windmills and pagodas
dikes and water paddies
Calvinism and Buddhism
color my past
My ancestors
Fished along the shores of the
Baltic and Yellow Seas
in straw hats and wooden shoes,
Founded ancient dynasties,
Invented windmills
My grandfathers' Fathers
were yangban
and farmers
My Grandfathers
were politicians and theologians
They hid Jews
and were shot by Communists
I am a melange of
European and Asian,
and you ask me
which nese am I.

Julie Kim, a Presidential Scholar, National Merit Finalist, and professional violinist, graduated from Stuart Country Day School in Princeton, New Jersey, and Princeton University. She is currently studying in the M.D.-Ph.D. program at the School of Medicine of Johns Hopkins University.

THE DALAI LAMA

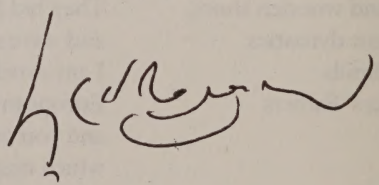
MESSAGE

I am pleased to know that Fellowship in Prayer is going to observe 23rd September 1990 as the Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth.

Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth's living things. This lack of respect extends even to earth's human descendants, the future generations who will inherit a vastly degraded planet if destruction of the natural environment goes unchecked.

The increasing international concern over the state of the earth in which we all live is an encouraging sign. We have the responsibility, as well as the capability to protect the earth.

Let us all join Fellowship in Prayer's Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation for the purification of our planet.



The Dalai Lama

May 10, 1990

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, INC.

291 Witherspoon Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08542-3227
office - (609) 924-6863
fax - (609) 924-6910

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